Pulling out from Sankhya Vahini Project of BSNL

476. SHRI LAJPAT RAI:
SHRI RAJIV RANJAN SINGH 'LALAN':
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Carnegie Mellon University has decided to pull out from the so called SANKHYA VAHINI PROJECT OF BSNL; i.e. to establish a broad band date network in the country;

(b) if so, what are the reasons therefor and details of the losses Government are likely to suffer; and

(c) what are the steps taken to give a fillip to the communication infrastructure?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reasons cited by the Carnegie Mellon University are the delay in launch of the Project and a Public Interest Litigation in Delhi High Court against the proposed joint venture. The Government will not suffer any losses.

(c) The government will proceed with its original plan of providing bandwidth through Sanchar Sagar Projects. Phase-I and Phase-II of Sanchar Sagar Project will be followed by induction of Dense Wave Division Multiplexing Systems (DWDM) to cater to higher bandwidth requirements. Sanchar Sagar Phase-I has been completed covering 33 cities and Phase II will cover 150 additional cities. In addition, Private Sector Companies as well as some PSUs are also executing Optical Fibre links for providing bandwidth in the country.

Safety of postal employees from Anthrax infection

477. SHRI AHMED PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any Anthrax laced mail has been received in the country recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what precautionary measures have been taken by Government to save the postal employees from being infected by Anthrax?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) No, Sir. The Department has not received any anthrax laced mail.

(b) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(c) The postal staff handling foreign mail at foreign post offices in New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai have been provided with hand gloves and face masks. Guidelines have been issued to all the concerned staff regarding the handling of suspicious mail.

Telephone Connections

478. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of telephone connections provided during the last three years, year-wise;

(b) the number of cellular telephone subscribers provided during the last three years; and

(c) what was the target for telephone connections for the year 2000-2001?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) and (b) The required information for the last three year is as given below:—

Year	Number of telephone connections provided (fixed telephones)	Number of cellular subscribers provided
1998-1999	3.81 million	0.32 million
1999-2000	5.04 million	0.68 million
2000-2001	6.06 million	1.7 million

(c) The target for telephone connections for the year 2000-2001 was 5.790 million lines for public sector units of the department.

Production and import of oilseeds

479. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the production and import figures of oilseeds during the last three financial years, year-wise;